

OFFICE OF  
GENERAL COUNSEL

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June 11, 2018

Chair Caroline C. Hunter  
Vice Chair Ellen L. Weintraub  
Federal Election Commission  
1050 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20463

MUR # 7419

Re: Violations of FECA by Senator Bill Nelson

Dear Chair Hunter and Vice Chair Weintraub,

This complaint is submitted by Leslie Dougher against United States Senator Clarence William "Bill" Nelson II ("Senator Nelson"); Senator Nelson's Campaign Committee, Bill Nelson for US Senate; and Treasurer, Peggy Gagnon (Collectively "Respondents"). Respondents recently produced, printed, and displayed a series of signs in connection with his campaign for United States Senate, which consistently failed to satisfy disclaimer requirements mandated by the Federal Election Campaign Act, as amended, and Federal Election Commission regulations. Specifically, on or about May 29, 2018 dozens of signs were displayed near a fundraiser for Senator Nelson in St. Augustine, Florida, which promoted Senator Nelson's candidacy and brazenly and illegally lacked ANY disclaimer statements whatsoever. *See Attachments A, B, C, & D).*

**Documented Disclaimer Violations**

***Respondents Violated Federal Election Law by Disregarding Disclaimer Requirements  
Applicable to All Public Communications Made by Political Committees.***

All public communications by a political committee or that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified federal candidate must, by law, contain specific disclaimers. *See* 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(a)(1); 110.11(b). If the communication is paid for and authorized by a candidate, an authorized committee of a candidate, or an agent thereof, these disclaimers "must clearly state that the communication has been paid for by the authorized political committee." 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(b)(1). If the communication is authorized by a candidate, an authorized committee of a candidate, or an agent thereof, but is paid for by another person, the disclaimers "must clearly state that the communication is paid for by such other person and is authorized by such candidate, authorized committee, or agent." 11 C.F.R. §

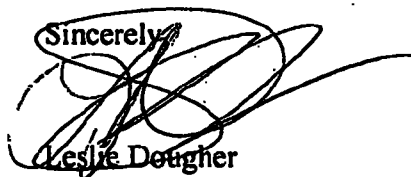
110.11(b)(2). If the communication is not authorized by a candidate, authorized committee of a candidate, or an agent thereof, the disclaimers "must clearly state the full name and permanent street address, telephone number, or World Wide Web address of the person who paid for the communication, and that the communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee." 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(b)(3). Moreover, any disclaimers:

must be presented in a clear and conspicuous manner, to give the reader, observer, or listener adequate notice of the identity of the person or political committee that paid for and, where required, that authorized the communication. A disclaimer is not clear and conspicuous if it is difficult to read or hear, or if the placement is easily overlooked.

11 C.F.R. § 110.11(c)

The signs displayed outside of Senator Nelson's May 29<sup>th</sup> fundraiser in St. Augustine, Florida appear to lack any disclaimers. *See Attachments A & B.* It is a logical presumption, based on the fact that these signs appeared at a campaign function, that Senator Nelson or Bill Nelson for US Senate, paid for and/or authorized the display of these signs. *See 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(b)(1)-(2).* At the very least, these signs expressly advocate for the election of a clearly defined federal candidate: Senator Nelson. *See Attachments A, B, C, & D.* Accordingly, these signs legally must have contained some kind of disclaimer, which appears to have been completely absent. Even if the signs somehow contained a tiny disclaimer that is not evident from a viewing of either Attachment A, B, C, or D, such disclaimer was legally deficient because it was not presented "in a clear and conspicuous manner." 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(c). The Respondents' use of these illegal signs constituted a violation of federal law plain and simple.

We thank you for your prompt consideration of this matter and urge that you take immediate action to address the violations cited herein.

Sincerely,  
  
Leslie Dougher

Leslie Dougher hereby verifies that the statements made in the above complaint are, upon information and belief, true.

Sworn pursuant to 18 U.S.C. §1001

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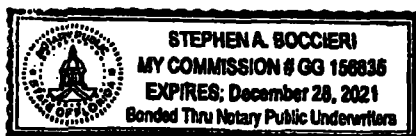
County of CLAY

State of Florida

The foregoing instrument was subscribed and sworn before me  
this 11 day of JUNE, 2018 by \_\_\_\_\_.

Stephen A. Bocieri  
Notary Public

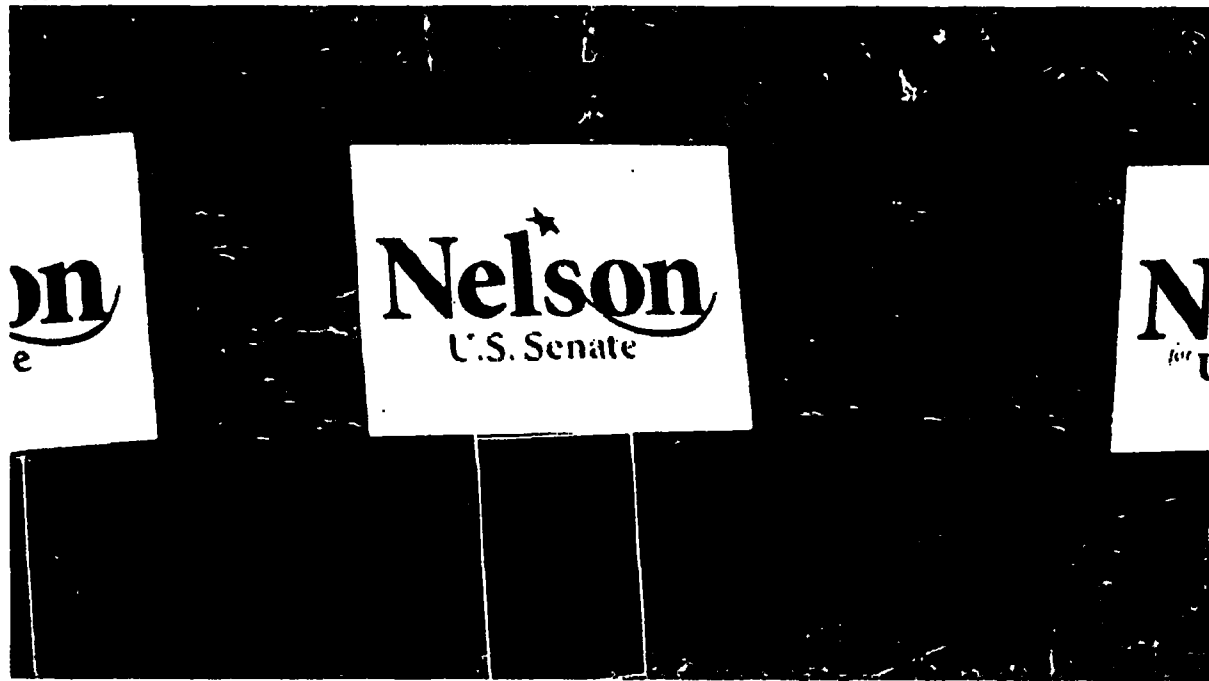
My commission expires \_\_\_\_\_



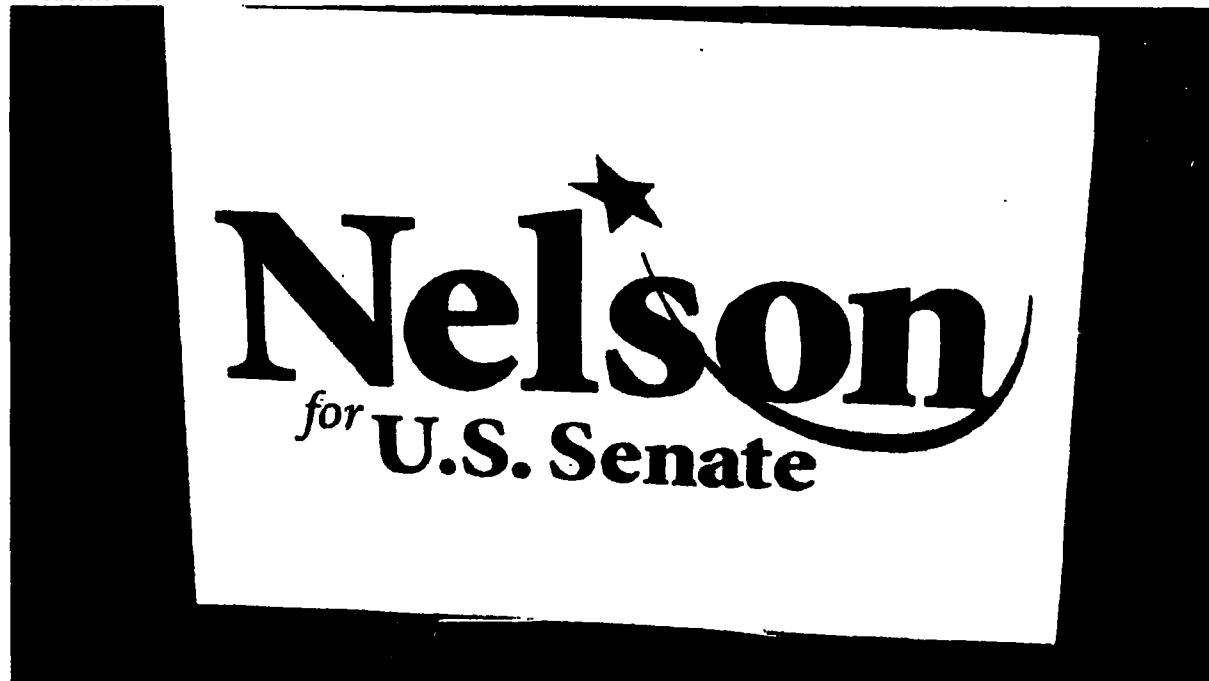
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5.29.18 Bill Nelson at Fundraiser in St. Augustine, FL

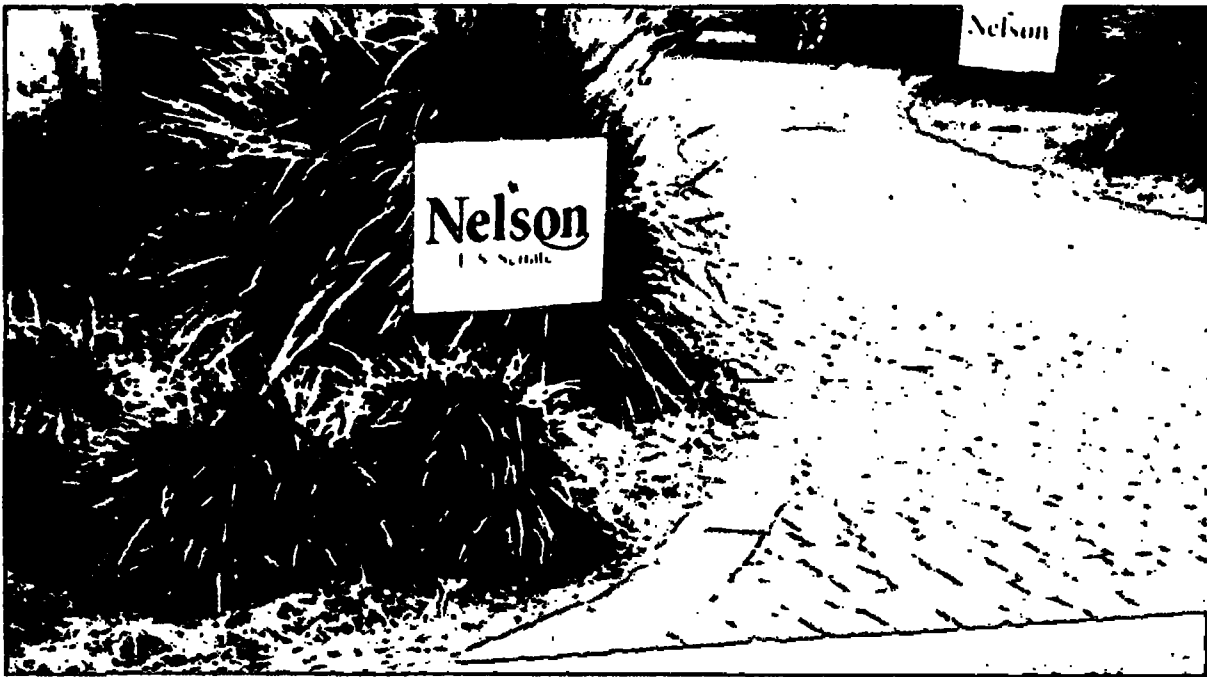
Attachment A



Attachment B



Attachment C



Attachment D

